

Sovereign Councils
of the



**Hawaiian Homelands
Assembly**

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June 16, 2016

**To: Chair Ikaika Anderson, Vice-Chair Trevor Ogawa & Members
Committee on Zoning & Planning
Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813**

**From: Kali Watson
Chairman of Statewide Economic/Housing Development
SCHHA
Honolulu, Hawaii 96792**

**Re: Hearing on Bill 27 on ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS
June 16, 2016 at 9:00 am
Council Board Room**

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CITY CLERK
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2016 JUN 15 PM 3:05

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

Dear Chair Anderson, Vice-Chair Ogawa and Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Bill 27 (2016) concerning creating incentives for the construction of Accessory Dwelling Units by temporarily waiving certain fees and permanently exempting the requirement to provide or dedicate land for park and playground purposes. We strongly support this bill, but would like the Council to expand these same exemptions to Ohana Units.

As advocates for homesteaders on Hawaiian Home Lands, we at SCHHA know that most overcrowded conditions would quickly be alleviated with the placement of Ohana Units on homestead lots throughout Oahu. With a significant number of homeless being Hawaiians who have abandoned the homesteads due to overcrowding, such units would allow them to return to their families and communities. Similar to ADUs, construction costs for Ohana Units would be reduced significantly by the same such expanded waivers.

Now is the time to provide a real solution to our housing crisis in Hawaii. With the price of housing and the lack of affordable rental housing, Accessory Dwelling Units and Ohana Units provide a viable answer to making more shelter available to people with the greatest needs – our homeless.

ADUs and Ohana units provide a community-based solution which actively includes our Hawaiian communities by allowing them to construct such detached units or retrofit or expand their existing houses.

With over 28,000 Hawaiians on the DHHL residential waiting list, affordable housing in the Hawaiian Homestead Program is a critical priority. Waiving fees for both ADUs and Ohana Units is an important step in alleviating this crisis.

There are presently 3,921 residential homestead lots in Kapolei, Nanakuli, Honolulu, Waianae and Waimanalo. A quick survey shows often times three generations, sometimes numbering 20 people, living in the same household. Besides being overcrowded, many homes are in need of repair, dilapidated and unsafe. Sadly, many are forced to abandon the homestead to live on the beach, in their cars, in the bushes or on the streets. Hawaiians make up a large portion of our homeless. It's about time the State and City take steps to address this outrageous and unacceptable situation plaguing our indigenous people.

To encourage the use of ADUs on lands governed by the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, Bill 27 reduces construction costs in a positive way. DHHL may need to take steps to promulgate rules governing and allowing rentals on their lots pursuant to Sections 207.5 and 208 of the HHCA. More importantly, however, the existing rules allow Ohana Units *now*. These units could be constructed immediately, and with much greater ease if Bill 27 were expanded to include Ohana Units.

Of the 5,000 homeless, with around 34% being Hawaiians, these units would easily provide immediate relief in the form of permanent rental or additional family housing. The ADU homestead owners would receive rental income to assist with their mortgage payments and other household expenses. The Ohana Units will have family members to help with the construction costs of these units. The mutual benefits are obvious and clearly a practical and less costly approach to address the homeless situation. This is a viable and probably more acceptable approach rather than putting up a collection of temporary concentrated homeless shelters, which often times become permanent. Individual members in the communities or owners of these ADUs and Ohana Units become part of the solution with a vested interest in the success of having rent paying tenants who lead more socially acceptable and productive lives. Or, become more employable family members. These new tenants or family members become less financially burdensome to our taxpayers and are more likely positioned to be transformed into productive members of our communities. Surrounded by other family members, they will have the family support so crucial in really providing the help they need.

Doing it this way will result in success and reduce overcrowding in homestead households, and allow those off of homesteads to return home. There are already community resource centers, social service agencies, and charter schools in these homestead areas, especially on the leeward coast where the homeless problem is the worst.

The Nanakuli Village Center is a good example where the community has stepped up with help from others. The Nanakuli Hawaiian Homestead Community Association is working with the private sector, Hawaiian Community Development Board, Kamehameha Schools, Waianae Comp., Ho'okulaiwi and UHWO to fulfill their dream of a place where people can find social services, health clinics, commercial enterprise and a large Kamehameha Cope learning/community center. They've partly addressed their homeless situation by

building a 48-unit affordable housing project called Hale Makana O Nanakuli that services people in the 30-40% AMI. The City provided HOME and CDBG funds for Hale Makana. UHWO provided a Resource Center. The City must work with communities like Nanakuli if it hopes to solve or lessen the homeless problem. The next step is to help facilitate the installation of ADUs and Ohana Units. Just in Nanakuli, there are 1,049 existing, large homestead lots that all could accommodate ADUs and Ohana Units.

Such an initiative requires significant planning, some financial and personnel commitments on the part of the City and action by the State, especially DHHL. The community is prepared to act. They just need the legislative tools. The first step is to have this Council pass Bill 27, expand it to include Ohana Units, and then the mayor sign it into law.

The Sovereign Councils of the Hawaiian Homelands Assembly, formerly the State Council of Hawaiian Homestead Associations was founded more than 25 years ago to unite homestead communities and to advocate for the beneficiaries of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1921. The SCHHA is the oldest statewide advocacy organization representing the interests of more than 30,000 beneficiaries and families residing in the communities of the Hawaiian Home Land Trust. Its mission is to promote the self determination of native Hawaiians and the well-being of homestead communities. As past Director of DHHL and as Chairman of Economic/Housing /Committee for SCHHA, I can appreciate the importance of building affordable rental housing. Bill 27 (2016) is a step in the right direction. This would be extremely helpful in addressing the lack of affordable housing for our low-income and homeless populations.

I respectfully urge you to pass Bill 27 (2016) with an amendment to include Ohana Units.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kali Watson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kali" being more prominent than the last name "Watson".

Kali Watson
Chairman of Housing/Economic Development